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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION

Letter dated 21 February 1996 from the Permanent Representatives of the Russian Federation and Turkmenistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you the text of the joint statement on the results of talks concerning the problems affecting the Caspian Sea, signed by the Deputy Chairman of the Government of the Russian Federation, Mr. A. A. Bolshakov, and the Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers of Turkmenistan, Mr. B. O. Shikhmuradov.

We should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 97 of the preliminary list.

(Signed) S. LAVROV
Permanent Representative of
the Russian Federation
to the United Nations

(Signed) A. ATAEVA
Permanent Representative
of Turkmenistan
to the United Nations

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ANNEX

Joint Statement by the Russian Federation and Turkmenistan on the results of talks concerning the problems affecting the Caspian Sea

A meeting of a delegation of the Russian Federation headed by the Deputy Chairman of the Government of the Russian Federation, Mr. A. A. Bolshakov, and a delegation of Turkmenistan headed by the President of Turkmenistan, Mr. S. A. Niyazov, took place on 11 and 12 August 1995 in Turkmenbashi.

The President of Turkmenistan, Mr. Niyazov, welcomed the messages from the President of the Russian Federation, Mr. B. N. Yeltsin, and the Chairman of the Government of the Russian Federation, Mr. V. C. Chernomyrdin, which expressed the Russian Federation's strong desire to develop in every possible way relations based on partnership with Turkmenistan. The messages also indicated the readiness of the Russian Federation to do everything to assist the efforts by Turkmenistan to ensure stability and peace in the region and stressed that Turkmenistan's peacemaking initiatives and commitment to neutrality were supported by the Russian Federation and corresponded to the long-term tasks of its foreign policy.

During the talks, the delegation heads of the Russian Federation and Turkmenistan reached agreement on setting up joint companies to carry out specific projects in the commercial and economic field and in the construction of highways and main railway lines. The Russian side stressed that cooperation with Turkmenistan afforded the Russian Federation unique opportunities for establishing the shortest commercial routes to the countries of South and South-East Asia, the Middle East and other regions.

The sides agreed to set up joint structures for monitoring the ecosystem of the Caspian Sea, preserving its bio-resources and managing its fish resources. In this regard, it was stressed that Russian-Turkmen projects and initiatives were open to participation by other countries.

Having comprehensively discussed the problems related to the legal status of the Caspian Sea, the sides noted with satisfaction the similarity of the positions and approaches for solving those problems in accordance with the national interests of the two countries and reached agreement on the following issues:

1. The sides recognized the need for cooperation in questions relating to the use and protection of the Caspian Sea, which requires the elaboration and adoption of agreed decisions on the basis of consensus on the part of all the States of the Caspian region. Recognizing that the Caspian Sea is a unique, integral ecological complex, and realizing the responsibility of the States of the Caspian region for protecting it as an important element of the world's ecosystem, the sides consider that all activities in the Caspian Sea must be developed on a basis that precludes any damage to its environment.

2. The sides agreed that approaches to resolving issues related to the legal status of the Caspian Sea must be based on an all-round consideration of the political, economic and social interests of the States of the Caspian region. In this regard, the sides believe that all rights with regard to the Caspian Sea appertain to the States of the Caspian region and that they alone may define rules governing activities in the Caspian as well as conditions for involving physical persons and legal entities of third countries.

3. The sides consider that the mutual relations of the States of the Caspian region must be developed in accordance with the principles of respect for State sovereignty and good-neighbourliness, mutually advantageous cooperation and equitable partnership. The Caspian Sea must be utilized exclusively for peaceful purposes.

4. The sides agree that, in order to resolve questions related to the definition of the legal regime of the Caspian Sea, it is necessary to elaborate a document (convention) on the legal status of the sea, which should serve as the basis for drawing up international legal norms for regulating:

- Navigation,
- Utilization of biological resources,
- Utilization of mineral resources,
- Protection and preservation of the ecosystem.

On this basis, the sides confirm that the questions relating to activities in the Caspian Sea, including the use of its aquatic area, minerals and natural resources, must be regulated by multilateral agreements with the participation of all States of the Caspian region as well as their legislation corresponding to those agreements.

5. The sides consider that it is necessary to establish a mechanism for regional cooperation in the Caspian in order to resolve all questions that relate to the use of the Caspian Sea and are of common interest.

For the Government of the of the Russian Federation:	For the Government of Turkmenistan:
(Signed) A. A. BOLSHAKOV	(Signed) B. O. SHIKHMURADOV